

CAREER FOCUS

How does the Base of Preference program affect career Airmen?

BY MASTER SGT. DAVID HALVORSON
TEAM KIRTLAND career assistance advisor

Last week we looked at the Base of Preference program and how it applied to first term Airmen assignments. As promised, this week we'll look at how the Base of Preference program affects the assignment process for career Airmen.

To be sure, there are certain criteria that must be met when career Airmen apply for a base of preference, but with a little insight the process can offer excellent assignment opportunities.

So what options are available?

For starters, career Airmen may request a permanent change of station base of preference from the continental United States to the continental United States or may request a base of preference to remain in-place at a continental United States location.

To help with planning, remember that career Airmen must have 41 months time on station at the time of application and at least 48 months time on station before departure.

This means you can begin the process of applying for a base of preference before your permanent change of station eligibility window arrives—as the saying goes, timing is everything!

In order to qualify for a base of preference, career Airmen must not already be selected for permanent change of station or have an assignment selection date. Additionally, Airmen must not be an overseas volunteer *or* have any other voluntary applications pending, and applicants must be eligible for permanent change of station without waivers.

Note that a permanent change of station base of preference assignment is *not* authorized from the continental United States to overseas, or from overseas to overseas, since these assignments are made in accordance with overseas permanent change of station selection priorities.

So there you have it! Now it's up to you to take advantage



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of this outstanding program.

For more information on the Base of Preference program and assignment process contact Military Personnel Center customer service at 846-5660 or logon to the AFPC Airman Assignments Web page www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlisted/BOP%20Criteria.htm, or contact your career assistance advisor at 846-6636 or david.halvorson@kirtland.af.mil.

It's the holiday season again; travel safely, wisely

BY WAYNE RAGAN
377th Air Base Wing chief of safety

Has the year gone as quickly for you as it has for me? Just the other day it was Christmas, and now it is that time again. Time flies faster than a reindeer.

Christmas is a family time and many of us will attempt to drive long distances in a very short period of time. A four-day pass and a freeway can get you almost anywhere in the continental United States. A chance to see mom, pop and the rest of the family is a big temptation.

Winter driving is especially dangerous and can be even more dangerous if a little extra speed, a little alcohol and a little bit of fatigue are involved.

The Air Force has not had a good year with mishaps.

During the summer, 82 members died. Most of the fatalities were in vehicle mishaps, some involving alcohol, some involving speed, some involving fatigue, but all involving a distinct lack of judgment.

Before you depart for the holiday season, consider a couple of things: More than 43,000 people lose their lives in vehicle crashes each year and over 2 million suffer disabling injuries, according to the National Safety Council.

The threat remains the same: speed, alcohol and fatigue.

Your best defense against becoming a statistic is to slow down and obey the posted speed limits. That extra 10 of 15 miles an hour only gains you a few minutes a day.

Don't drink and drive--ever--and get plenty of rest before and during the holiday so you do not drive tired.



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FORUM

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COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

New TV for Nook

The television in the Enchanted Nook (snack bar in Building 20604) doesn't work. It only gets one channel and the volume doesn't work. I would like to be able to watch the news while I eat my lunch at the Nook.

Could you please get a cable hookup with a working TV?

Thank you for your excellent suggestion. As a result of your Forum, we have purchased a new television for the Enchanted Nook and we are working with Chugach and the cable company to install cable. We expect to have the project done immediately after the holidays.

Head lice infection not health hazard, rules vary

Recently, parents of children attending the Kirtland Youth Center were notified that our children were exposed to head lice.

I asked the staff when or if they would screen the other children. They told me they would not screen the other children, because it would be unfair to single any children out. They

also said it was the parent's responsibility to check their own children.

That morning, I called Public Health to ask about a base policy concerning head lice. They did some research and told me that there is not a policy and basically there was nothing they could do.

Today, the Shandiin childcare center notified a member of my office that she needed to pick-up her child because the they would be closed down for the next two days because of head lice.

Not only is this hard on the children, it is extremely inconvenient for people who need to find alternate care for their children. This could possibly have avoided by simply checking the children attending the Youth Center.

I also called Sandia Base Elementary and spoke with the school nurse about the school policy regarding head lice. She said that once a child has been identified as being infected with head lice, all children in the class would be inspected, and those infected would be sent home.

Why is the base policy (or lack thereof) contrary to public schools in our area? Is there a way we can put a base policy in place to prevent future outbreaks?

Thank you for your concern about preventing head lice at the Youth Center.

Shandiin CDC (a Department of Energy facility), Albuquerque Public Schools, and Kirtland Youth Programs all have different regulations that govern them.

The Youth Center follows specific policies established in "Caring for Our Children" where a child must not be excluded immediately or sent home early from childcare because of head lice.

Head lice infestation in children attending childcare is common and is not considered a health threat because lice do not spread disease. Parents of affected children are informed that their child must be treated properly before returning to the childcare facility the next day.

When a parent informs the Youth Center staff that their child had been exposed to head lice, the child must receive at least one treatment before

returning to the center.

The Youth Center posts information for parents when a child is exposed to head lice and takes precautionary measures to help prevent the spread of head lice. Once parents are notified, it is the responsibility of the parents to screen their children.

The elementary schools are required to follow guidelines established by the Albuquerque Public School's Nursing Services.

The school nurse or medical assistant is required to physically check a child who is suspected of having head lice. If the child has head lice, parents are notified and the classroom of infected student is checked by the school nurse or health assistant.

The child is not sent home, but the student must show proof of treatment upon returning to school.

Identification use questionable

Can someone with a Veterans Affairs hospital card use the BX? I was in the BX on Tuesday and the gentleman in front of me used it. I just wondered if it's legal.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. VA Medical Center cards do not entitle the holder to Army and Air Force Exchange Service privileges.

While Army and Air Force Exchange Service cashiers are trained to check for valid identification cards, the cashiers do, on occasion, miss one. AAFES has recently held training to specifically address the VA Medical Center card to ensure we are not allowing unauthorized shoppers to use AAFES facilities. If you see an identification card being used that you don't recognize, please mention it to the cashier or manager immediately.

Processing time still long

I was just reading the Forum column on the processing time for identification cards. Unfortunately, the processing time has not fully returned to normal.

I was just at military personnel and I waited 2.5 hours to get my identification card renewed. Getting the card once I was inside only took five minutes, but 2.5 hours, even on a busy day, is a bit excessive.

I just wanted to let you know that the processing time is not quite back

to normal—unless a 2.5-hour wait is normal.

Our Military Personnel Flight sometimes faces system failures and challenges that are beyond our control (i.e., the "fix" is not one that we can do locally). We are staffed and equipped with four workstations to provide identification cards and DEERS and RAPIDS inquiries to TEAM KIRTLAND.

The week you came in to get your identification card, we lost capability on one workstation. The problem was reported to RAPIDS (in Alexandria, Va.) immediately; however, because we still had 75 percent capability, we were not considered a priority repair. Our people worked diligently with RAPIDS and the Air Force Personnel Center, Randolph AFB, Texas, for resolution. Full capacity was finally restored 11 days later when we received the repair disk.

Although additional manpower and workstations could reduce wait times, they were not feasible at that time. We are looking into ways to provide faster service and appreciate your patience and understanding.

We apologize for the inconvenience.

Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691
CE Help Desk, 846-8222
Commissary, 846-9586
Computer help, 846-5926
Energy wasting, 846-4633
Exchange Service, 266-9887
Family Services, 846-0741
Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639
Law Enforcement, 846-7926
Legal Services, 846-4217
Medical Clinic, 846-3406
Services Squadron, 846-1828

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